

Amendments to the Claims

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-10 (canceled).

Claim 11 (currently amended). A method for operating an injection valve having a housing and at least the following components commonly disposed in the housing:

~~one~~ a piezoelectric actuator for generating a stroke, a displaceable component to be displaced, and a hydraulic element for play compensation, ~~and a common housing with said actuator, said component, and said element disposed therein, the~~

the method which comprises:

~~reversibly controlling a stroke of the displaceable component by applying a drive voltage to the actuator; and~~

biasing the actuator with a bias voltage having a ~~bias~~ polarity opposing a preferred polarity polarization direction of the actuator, to thereby cause a preliminary contraction of the actuator; and

applying a drive voltage to the actuator, the drive voltage having a polarity corresponding to the preferred polarity of the actuator, to thereby generate a stroke of the displaceable component geater than the preliminary contraction of the actuator.

Claim 12 (previously presented). The method according to claim 11, wherein the bias voltage is lower than a voltage causing a change in a polarity of the actuator.

Claim 13 (canceled).

Claim 14 (previously presented). The method according to claim 11, which comprises determining the bias voltage to effect a reduction in an energy consumption of the actuator.

Claim 15 (previously presented). The method according to claim 11, which comprises specifying the drive voltage together with bias voltage for setting a defined stroke of the displaceable component.

Claim 16 (previously presented). The method according to claim 15, which comprises determining a volume of material injected with the injection valve by way of the defined stroke of the displaceable component.

Claim 17 (currently amended). In a control unit for generating a drive voltage for an injection valve, the injection valve having at least one piezoelectric actuator, a displaceable component, and a hydraulic element commonly disposed in a common housing, ~~and wherein a stroke of the displaceable component is reversibly controllable by application of a drive voltage to the actuator, the improvement which comprises:-~~ housing;

said control unit being configured to generate a bias voltage for biasing the actuator in opposition to a preferred polarization direction of the actuator to cause a preliminary contraction of the actuator, and

to ~~set~~ generate the drive voltage having a polarity in the preferred polarization direction of the actuator, to thereby generate a stroke of the displaceable component;

wherein the preliminary contraction of the actuator in combination with the following stroke represents an increase of the stroke of the displaceable component using the bias voltage.

Claim 18 (previously presented). The control unit according to claim 17, wherein the bias voltage is lower than a voltage that would result in a change in a polarity of the actuator.

Claim 19 (previously presented). In combination with a gasoline engine, the control unit according to claim 17 configured to drive an injection valve for injecting fuel into the gasoline engine.

Claim 20 (previously presented). In combination with a diesel engine, the control unit according to claim 17 configured to drive an injection valve for injecting fuel into the diesel engine.

Claim 21 (new). The method according to claim 11, wherein the displaceable component to be displaced is an injector needle.

Claim 22 (new). A method for operating an injection valve having at least one piezoelectric actuator, a displaceable component, a hydraulic element, and a common housing with said actuator, said component, and said element disposed therein, the method which comprises:

biasing the actuator with a bias voltage having a sign opposite a sign of the drive voltage to thereby contract the actuator, the bias voltage having a value below a voltage causing a change in a polarity of the actuator; and

subsequently applying a drive voltage with a sign opposite the bias voltage to generate a stroke of the displaceable component.